

Mockingbird Times

Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth



January 2005

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out Across the Nation

Volume V, Issue 1

Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org or call 206-323-5437 (KIDS)

Letter from the Editor
Jim Theofelis
Page 2

Creative Corner
Jeremy M.
Page 2

What is Family?
Rico Evans
Page 2

Culture of Hip Hop
Darius Reynolds
Page 3

ASK-Y Advocacy Day
Princess Hollins
Page 3

Healthy Outlook Fosters Independence
Ashley Grant
Page 3

The House of Sarah Family Homes
Darius Reynolds
Page 3

Reflections about Gentrification
J. Eboh
Page 4

Filmmaker Moore's Speech Provokes Thought
Anthony Guess
Page 4

Movie Review: The Incredibles
Courtney Konietzko
Page 4

Check out the Bonus Articles Section Online at mockingbirdsociety.org

This month Jamica Henderson explores Seattle online!

Homeless Youth Educate and Inspire at Common Cents Forum

ANTHONY GUESS



ON THURSDAY DECEMBER 2nd 2004, AT THE BOOMTOWN CAFE, citizens from around the Seattle area came to hear poetry and listen to how homelessness affects youth in the long run of life. The panel consisted of four members, who are or at one point in their lives were homeless. Courtney Konietzko and Darius Reynolds, reporters from the *Mockingbird Times*, read poetry at this event.

Courtney wrote and read a poem called *Mirror*, which left a lot of people impressed. I asked a lady named Emily Green why she came out to the event and what she thought about the poems. Green replied that she came out just to get another perspective of homeless youth. Green also said that the poem that Courtney wrote left a big impact on her because that's how she thought of her self for a long time in her life (the poem is about being a person of color in a white world).

After the poems were read, the panel shared their experience of being homeless and how their life now is affected because of it. For example, Dustin, one of the members on the panel, said that his home situation wasn't that great and so he left home. He said that being homeless let him experience emotions and feelings that he doesn't feel like he would have gone through if he grew up in a nice structured home. Dustin said that he's now part of the YMCA program and attends Bellevue Community College. When Dustin was asked what he thought the audience could do to help minimize homelessness among youth, his response was, "nothing." He believes that some kids choose to be

Throughout the presentation I got the feeling that homeless youth aren't asking for a big miracle; they just want to be noticed and feel needed.

homeless, but one thing he said to do was if you see some one holding up a cup for money you should give them some. And if you don't feel comfortable giving them money because you believe that they are going to use it for drugs, well you should go out and buy them food. Dustin stressed that what made him feel not wanted or not even part of this world was ignored by the people that walked past when he was standing out in the cold asking for money for food.

I asked panel members how being homeless effected or impacted your personality or life time goals. One panel member, Sarah, responded by saying that being homeless made her more equipped to deal with the world, and allowed her to see the world with a clearer view. Although she advises youth to stay at home if it's an option, she says that living on the streets allowed her to find herself and what she wanted out of life, which is to be simply happy. Rob, another panel member, was asked what

the system do to improve the amount of youth experiencing homelessness. Rob's response was that he thinks that some organizations should link together so they can receive more money for youth, instead of stepping on each others toes for grants. All the panel members were great in answering questions and gave thoughtful experiences to back up their opinions.

Throughout the presentation I got the feeling that homeless youth aren't asking for a big miracle they just want to be noticed and feel needed. The members on the panel had wonderful things to say, for example, Rob said that everyone has problems and issues and that homelessness is his problem. Rob encouraged everyone to just have an open heart.

The presentation was put on by the **Fremont Public Association's Common Cents**, an organization that raises money for homeless youth. For more information about this event and Common Cents, go to www.fremontpublic.org/commoncentsforkids/ccents.html

Military Actions Provoke Talk of Mandatory Draft

MISTY COOK



JUST THE WORD "DRAFT" SENDS CHILLS down the spine of many Americans alive today. The draft is a system that has lain dormant for years, and now, after decades of inactivity, the draft could be activated. There are pending bills in legislation (legislation: the making of a law or laws) in the House and Senate that could reinstate the draft as early as June 15th, 2005.

Companion Bills S89 and HR 163 are nearly identical in text and are referred to as "The Universal National Service Act of 2003" in their short title. Introduced to the House of Representatives on January 7th, 2003, the actual text of the HR 163 bill reads: "To provide for the common defense by requiring that all young persons in the United States, including women, perform a period of military service or a period of civilian service in furtherance of the national defense and homeland security, and for other purposes." The entire text of the HR 163 bill via THOMAS, a website which provides "Legislative Information on the Internet." THOMAS was initially created "In the Spirit of Thomas Jefferson", and is "a service of the Library of Congress". The full text of the HR 163 bill is at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

The 2005 Draft would require ALL young people ages 18 - 26 to perform a 2 year period of military service, including women. Not only would every young American be required to perform military service, according to paragraph "a", section 2 of the HR 163 bill, every single young American would be obligated to perform some sort of military service for a minimum of 2 years. The text of Section 2, paragraph "a" of the HR 163 bill reads:

"(a) OBLIGATION FOR YOUNG PERSONS- It is the obligation of every citizen of the United States, and every other person residing in the United States, who is between the ages of 18 and 26 to perform a period of national service as prescribed in this Act..."

If Rumsfeld's prediction of a "long, hard slog" in Afghanistan and Iraq and a permanent state of "War on Terrorism" proves itself to be true, then it appears that the US will have no choice but to reactivate the draft. According to the Home School Legal Defense Association, the President will decide how many young Americans go to war and under what circumstances. Here's what the HSLDA (Online) had to say about the S. 89 bill (nearly identical to the HR 163 bill): "The language of this bill mandates a national service obligation for every U.S. citizen and permanent resident, aged 18-26. It authorizes the President to establish both the number of people to be selected for military service, and the means of selection. Additionally, the measure requires those not selected specifically for military service to perform their national service obligation in a civilian capacity for at least two years."

Higher education will no longer be a refuge for would-be draft dodgers and Canada will no longer be an option to escape military service, the draft, or fighting in this "War on Terror". On December 12, 2001, the U.S and Canada signed a "Smart Border Declaration". This border agreement could be used to keep U.S draft dodgers in the United States and out of Canada. John Manly, who was the previous Canadian minister of foreign affairs, and former U.S. director of Homeland Security Tom Ridge both signed the "Smart Borders Declaration" in 2001. The "Smart Borders Declaration" includes a "pre-clearance agreement" for people leaving or entering both countries, along with a 30-point plan to "improve border security".

Reforms aiming to make the draft more "equal" as far as class and gender go will eliminate higher education as a shelter and include women in the draft pool. Once drafted because of the HR 163 bill, underclassman

DRAFT CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Letter from the Editor

JIM THEOFELIS



HAPPY NEW YEAR! WITH THE NEW YEAR COMES new opportunities to create a world in which ALL children and youth are valued, supported and honored. The Mockingbird Society is a mission-driven organization dedicated to providing public education, advocacy and positive system reform to benefit the thousands of children, adolescents and families involved in the foster/kinship care system. One of the primary strategies employed by The Mockingbird Society is the inclusion and leadership of young people who have experience with foster care and/or homelessness. We believe that to the degree young people are provided a forum to present their experiences, ideas and passions the general public and elected officials will begin to understand the hope and promise that comes with these same youth.

I want to take this opportunity to present two important opportunities for young people aging out of the system (turning age 18). **Extending Services to Youth for Post-High School/Voc-Tec Training:** Currently, young people who are in foster care and turn age 18 can remain in their foster home until they receive their high school diploma or GED. The Mockingbird Society believes that

this same opportunity needs to be available to those youth who have received their high school diploma/GED and want to continue into college or a voc-tech program. The 2005 Washington legislature will be debating this very issue. If you want to assist The Mockingbird Society and other advocates in the development of policy that allows youth to stay in care while in college contact us for **Youth Advocacy Day** scheduled for **February 11th in Olympia**. This is always a remarkable day when foster and homeless youth meet directly with legislators to share ideas, hopes and dreams.

College for Washington State Foster Youth: The Governor's Scholarship Fund is a remarkable program that continues to send youth from foster care to college. Applications are now available for high school juniors who are also in foster care. You can check out this amazing opportunity and other's at the **Washington Education Foundation** at: www.waedfoundation.org or toll free at 1-877-655-04787.

Finally, The Mockingbird Society is holding it's **annual fund raiser on February 6th**. If you would like to assist us either by volunteering, donating an item for our silent auction or making a cash donation please contact us at 206-323-5437 or www.mockingbirdsociety.org. We need your help in "building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth". Make it a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org



CREATIVE CORNER

You Never Stopped Lovin' Me

JEREMY M.

Hey Ma,
How ya doin', it's your son now,
And I was thinkin' of you and put the drugs down,
I'm tryin' to do somethin' that will make you proud
Instead of every time I call it's to bail me out,
I never listened to things you used to tell me,
Like they got plans for ya,
Ain't nothin' I can do once The Law gets they hands on ya.
Not a for real talker but you talk to me,
About those girls wearin' hoodys and jeans,
Livin' at Granny's house takin' all of her things,
And I will always be there to give you whatever you want,
You never stopped lovin' me,
You don't have to call the cops no more,
You never stopped lovin' me.
You don't have to hope no more
You never stopped lovin' me,
I ain't touchin' the dope no more.
You never stopped lovin' me.
You don't have to cry no more.

What is Family?

RICO EVANS



WHAT IS FAMILY? To some people family is a group of people who have similar DNA. Some consider friends to be family, but what is the difference between family and friends? I believe that if you pick your friends wisely they can be your family. They respect you, care for you and give you help when you need it. Most of my friends have taught me more than my family has. I have had more emotional support from them too, they have been all around better people than my family has. I think that in a family everyone should have love for each other.

There are so many ideas on how people think that a family should live their lives together and that's because not everyone is raised the same. When they grow up and get married and have their kids, depending on how they were raised that is where they will get their knowledge about family.

FAMILY CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Mockingbird Editorial Staff and will be opened by Editorial Staff. All incoming correspondence to reporting staff under 18 years of age will be opened first by Mockingbird Editorial Staff.

DRAFT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

would only be allowed to finish up their current semester before they get shipped off to the Middle East, and senior students would be fighting in this "War on Terrorism" as soon as they finished their academic year. Once Canada and higher education are no longer options for dodging the draft, Americans who currently support the U.S invasion of the Middle East will be confronted with the undeniable possibility that their own children, grandchildren, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters could be chosen by President Bush to fight in this "War on Terrorism."

The facts suggest that if you are a young American and you are drafted in 2005, dodging the 2005 draft will be harder for you than it was for your parent's generation in the Vietnam era.

In Part II of this series on the draft, I will be asking the Seattle community and various experts from around the world about their views on the U.S 2005 draft and the impact they believe a draft will have on the youth of this Nation and the people of the world. Be sure to check out February's issue to read all about what this draft could mean for you, your children, your grandchildren,

your sons, your daughters, your brothers and your sisters, coming from a variety of sources.

Information in this article was obtained from the following sources:

- Webster's Concise Dictionary
- CNN News "Rumsfeld predicts 'long, hard slog' in Iraq", <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/10/22/sprj.iq.main/>
- www.hslda.org/legislation/national/2003/s89/default.asp
- www.canadianembassy.org/border/index-en.asp
- www.wbai.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=1462&Itemid=2

THANK YOU'S...

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ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents involved in homelessness and foster care. The *Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 60,000 copies being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A, as inserts in community newspapers Real Change, *Seattle Sun* and *South Star* and a private mailing list. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2005 The Mockingbird Society.

A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

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Donations may be tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$ _____

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Shannon Barello

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Volunteers
Anna Trombley, Kirsten Hansen-Day, Aleta Kennedy, Denise Redinger

Positive Power: Culture of Hip Hop



DARIUS REYNOLDS



HIP HOP TO ME IS MORE THAN MUSIC; it's a way to express myself—a way of life and, for some people, a job. I started writing poetry when I was 15 to escape some of the things that were going on in my life; like being in foster care and going in and out of juvenile detention. Two years later I met a kid who wanted to be a rapper. He wrote down all of his songs, and encouraged me to do the same. At first my songs were all about being a gangster, but I grew out of that and started combining my poetry with my rap songs. I stopped listening to a lot of gangster rap (music that glorifies gangs and crime) and started listening to more conscious rap (rap that talks about more positive things); which is usually performed by rappers who nobody has heard of.

I believe that true hip hop culture revolves mostly around the conscious and underground rap scene; most of these rappers aren't rapping about how much money and jewelry they have, they are rapping about living life and improving your rap skills and yourself. They also talk about what they see going in the world. A good example of this is the Black Eyed Peas song, *Where is the Love*.

Rap has changed a lot over the years. When rap started in the early seventies there was just the DJ and the Emcee. It was all about expression and having fun. Rappers rapped about parties and how good they were at rapping. There were also break dancers, taggers (people who spray paint pictures on walls) and people who freestyle rapped (rapping off the top of your head) and there were the clothes. When hip hop first started, rappers were wearing anything for leather to feathers; (now its all about the baggy style and my personal favorite hats).

It's great to be a part of the hip hop culture. Hip hop came from a very negative environment and became something great. Hip hop has broken free from race barriers and nowadays there are rappers from all sort of different backgrounds. Music collaboration has come a long way since Fab 5 Freddy and Deborah Harry from Blondie in 1980. Recently Rapper Nelly and Country music star Tim McGraw teamed up to do a song together. Collaborating with different kinds of music is a big part of hip hop because most hip hop artists want to create a sound that no one has heard before.



Hip Hop Icons Run-D.M.C.
Photo from www.pophotties.com

Rapping has done a lot for me; it's helped me improve my poetry, it helps me get my feelings out and get things off my mind. Now when my friends and I have nothing to do, instead of going out and getting into trouble, we get into a circle and start rapping. So I have to give thanks to the pioneers of hip hop for creating something so beautiful. I would like to encourage people to other forms of hip hop, not just what you hear on MTV. To find out about the best new underground hip hop visit www.undergroundhiphop.com.

Program Highlight: The House of Sarah Family Homes

DARIUS REYNOLDS

THE HOUSE OF SARAH FAMILY HOMES is a program that offers interim care (a temporary home during a transition) and therapy for boys ages 6-18. Most of the boys who live at the House of Sarah have been sexually, mentally and/or physically abused, or their parents simply gave them up.

The House of Sarah opened in 2000 and has been in operation for 4 years. There are currently five youth living in the home, though they have room for 12. The program offers several different kinds of therapy; milieu therapy (a form of group living therapy), family therapy and group therapy. The House of Sarah also offers educational planning and skill building and the youth are very involved in making decisions with their on-site caseworker.

Most of the youth who live at the House of Sarah are wards of the state, but parents can have supervised visits. Parents who have a possibility of getting their child back have to attend court ordered training before the child can return.

The youth living at the House of Sarah have a chance to earn privileges. Some of the privileges included are educational outings and trips to sports events. Freddie Hamlet; Executive Director of the House of Sarah says she just wants to help the children make themselves better people and let them know they are loved.

The House of Sarah always welcomes donations. The youth who currently live in the house are ages 11-16. If you would like to make a donation you can contact David Stewart at (206)799-5509. You can donate money or gifts--the youth there would like a video game system, so if you are looking for some way to help contact David.

ASK-Y Sponsors Youth Advocacy Day

PRINCESS HOLLINS



YOUTH ADVOCACY DAY IS APPROACHING, ON FEBRUARY 11, 2004. It's a great day for youth of all ages, races, stature, and cultures to gather in Olympia to support youth, community members and representatives, and to testify to legislatures about the continuous struggles they and others are facing in the foster care, kinship and homelessness system. Youth Advocacy Day is an annual event held in Olympia, Washington state's capitol. Every year Seattle's local community groups, foster care, kinship care and homeless youth

gather to give their testimonies and support proposed bills. This event is being sponsored for a second year by the Advocates for System Kids and Youth (ASK-Y) Coalition. ASK-Y is a coalition of motivated people who come together to discuss the advantages and disadvantages in the system. Members include service providers and youth from Seattle and around Washington State. ASK-Y focuses on issues young people face when involved in the juvenile justice system, mental health system, chemical dependency, employment and school system.

Last year the coalition proposed House Bill 3078, amending the sealing of juvenile records to shorten the time involved for young people to get their records sealed, which was passed. This bill has made an impact on young people everywhere, and there is now a clinic in Seattle where lawyers sit down with young people to help them through the process of sealing their records

so they can move on and apply for scholarships, grants, jobs and sign rental agreements.

This year ASK-Y and supporters are going back to Olympia to support the extended services portion of Kids Come First (KFC II), DSHS Children's Administration's proposal to improve services for kids. Kids Come First was launched in 2000 as a part of the DSHS long term program to reform the child welfare system. The ASK-Y Coalition encourages the extended service portion of the KCF II, and believe that this is an essential part of the system that could provide adolescents with support to help them excel in education and careers.

To find out more about how to get involved with the ASK-Y Coalition, find out more about the Kids Come First Plan and/or join ASK-Y for Advocacy Day in February, check out www.mockingbirdsociety.org or call 206-323-5437.

Healthy Outlook Fosters Independence

ASHLEY GRANT



THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT CHANGES AND CHALLENGES ONE MUST GO THROUGH in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, between the ages of 17 and 20. Several things determine how well a person can do in what some refer to as the "real world." The mind set of the person and how they were brought up has a lot to do with how they handle this transition.

Your mindset is important because if you are going to make the transition to adulthood successfully your philosophy about life has to make sense. It's hard to be successful in the "real world" if you have a selfish mindset. It is a known fact that the "real world" has no sympathy for anyone.

Everyone grows up for a reason. It was always told to me that you grow up to do one thing ... and that is to take care of yourself. Senior year in high school has a lot to do with becoming independent. It is the gateway of life. For some young people who grew up in foster care this is what they strive for, being independent. Always remember having the right frame of mind will put you ahead of the rest because you know what you want. The hard part is pursuing what you want and not letting anything or anyone prevent you from doing so.

The way an individual was brought up has a lot to do with their relationship with the outside world. Some youth have a more sheltered life than others. For some youth

it is not possible to go back home once they leave, while for others there can be a revolving door. The more time a young person has away from their comfort zone the more understanding they will get. Being in a comfort zone limits your activity with the outside world. When it is time for you to experience it for yourself and you don't agree with it at first, you will run back to what you know instead of coping with an uncomfortable situation. Others are stuck with the situation--comfortable or not. Knowing what curve balls life brings you is important to cope with the uncomfortable situations.

What I would suggest to the people going through these changes is just be aware of everything that is going on around them. Always remember to have an open mind. Reflecting on these changes puts a person in deep thought about their future. You will come to find out that life is all about choices. Remember "the choices you make today can affect the one for tomorrow."

Reflections about the Effects of Gentrification

J.EBOH



ONCE A WEEK I MAKE MY WAY TO THE MOCKINGBIRD TIMES OFFICE to complete my weekly eight hour shift. I really enjoy riding the bus. It gives me time to just think and stare out the window. One day not too long ago I found myself staring out the window like I would any other day. I noticed that the shapes, colors and images were not the same. On closer inspection, I realized that there was a new construction site forming on the street corner. I also noticed that there was another construction site about two blocks up the street. As the weeks went by I noticed more and more buildings popping up and being torn down.

What years ago would have seemed insignificant now had me worried. In my less than two years living in Seattle I was witnessing the transformation of a neighborhood. For those of you who don't know the Central District in Seattle, it is an area that is rumored to be troubled with crime and poverty. When this happens to a neighborhood, property values and land prices go down. While this may have a negative effect on economic vitality of a neighborhood, it gives real estate developers an advantage.

Cheap land equals lower construction cost, which equals a higher profit to real estate developers and investors once a property and/or land is sold. Once other businesses and developers hear about what's going on they too move quickly into a neighborhood while there is an opportunity at a reduced cost.

Initially this might seem all well and good. Residents of neighborhoods who were once marginalized suddenly find themselves surrounded by luxurious housing and fashionable new businesses. But often in life what seems to be a blessing is actually a curse. The new grocery store is too expensive. The posh new houses have a higher mortgage cost and the new

apparel store could eat up a week's paycheck with one outfit. The new cafe sells that beloved cup of morning coffee at three dollars more than the one three blocks North. All of the small businesses who thought all these new changes would bring in new customers and help their bottom line well... it turns out that because the big corporate businesses have bigger budgets and can afford to offer patrons newer, flashier products as soon as they hit the market. Mom and Pop can't compete and thus for the sake of survival, they close up shop or significantly curb their entrepreneurial ambitions. In a nutshell, gentrification has come to town.

Merriam Webster online dictionary (www.m-w.com) defines gentrification as: "the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displace earlier usually poorer residents." In laymen's terms, the wealthy move in and the poor move out. When the fiscal profile of a neighborhood changes drastically, the less affluent original residents have no opportunity to prepare for the change and thus make the transition.

By addressing gentrification, we as a society would be forced to admit that we are neither the land of the free nor the home of the brave.

I'll keep this simple. Gentrification has nothing to do with money, who's poor and who isn't. It has everything to do with people and how they treat each other. Until people stop hating each other and trying to justify why they're better than the guy across town, we'll just keep running in circles until something so bad happens that it forces people to get their acts together.

Perhaps I was mistaken in saying that my solution was simple. It takes a lot of work to let go of ones selfishness and biases. It will also take a lot of work for the business community to transform their relationship to the money and the "profits above all else" mentality that it entails. Despite the hurdles, I know that if we as a community can collectively stretch our hearts, minds and spiritual muscles; we'll soar over any obstacle yet to come. 

Filmmaker Moore's Speech Provokes Thought

ANTHONY GUESS

THE KEY ARENA WAS PACKED on October 19th to hear the great patriot Michael Moore speak. Moore spoke about Bush and his administration and wow...didn't he have a lot of things to say! For example, when Bush first became President, there was information left for him about the attack on the Twin Towers and that the terrorists were going to be using planes. After that statement a lot of people seemed to show some discomfort, maybe because they were shocked that someone like that was in office, or maybe they felt like they had been lied to for so long. Another point that Michael Moore brought up was that during the Presidential debate, President Bush stated that there wasn't going to be a draft. Moore's response was, "Who do you think is going to volunteer after the mess you created?" According to Moore, the amount of people volunteering for the army has gone down since 9-11. As an 18-year-old African-American male I don't feel comfortable joining the Army with the statements that our country is making.

Moore also discussed his movie, *Fahrenheit 9-11* and how he feels like it shows the truth--the truth that the media deprived its people. Moore's goal within his 61 city tour was to demonstrate that we as people have the right to know everything in order to make an informed decision. For instance, he brought up how we voted to send our troops to the Middle East because there were supposedly hidden weapons of mass destruction.

Moore states that we were not given all the facts, many Americans thought this was the right thing to in order to keep our citizens safe, but who is going to keep the soldiers safe? Before ending his speech, Moore said something that not only raised commotion in the arena, but it made me think. Moore asked, "During the debates, how many soldiers popped up on our TV screen and gave their thoughts about the war or even about the candidates themselves?" Moore believes the reason why not is because it might send the wrong message to a lot of Americans about the war and cause a lot of finger pointing among the people in power. I find it odd that we don't hear more soldiers on TV sharing their emotions or their thoughts of being in war, considering that every day they have to wonder if they're going to spend time with their family, or even perform their every day activities. Instead we see and hear brave men and women all the time explaining how joining the army can benefit you in so many ways, and take your life to the highest peak

Moore's speech was enthusiastic and very informative, although several people walked out of the arena. For example, people walked when Moore said that Ralph Nader had no chance in winning the Presidential election and he doesn't understand why he even ran. I hope that in the up coming years the media will try to do a better job by informing citizens of all the facts. 

Movie Review: *The Incredibles*

COURTNEY KONIETZKO

THE INCREDIBLES WAS ACTUALLY INCREDIBLY FUNNY! Pixar is amazing! The animation was very good with some of the characters sporting hair worthy of a Pantene commercial. The plot was no disappointment because it kept giving you more when you thought it was coming to an end-- without drawing it out to far.

I thought that *The Incredibles* was going to be just some dumb Disney flick with some 'incredibly fat man' in a red suit advertised on the sides of Metro busses. However, the Internet Movie Data Base (IMDB), the god of movie databases, rated it a 8.3, which convinced me to go see it. I was looking for something light that would make me laugh and I am trying to see new movies. For the most part, IMDB is an excellent resource for finding films to see and an entertaining cite to boot!

The Incredibles is a feel good film, an action-packed silly film that will make you laugh and a film that is appropriate for people of all ages. It tells the story of different super heroes and their tendency to save people who get them in trouble so they have to go into hiding and become 'normal.'

We meet the main characters Mr. Incredible and his wife, super hero Elastigirl, while they are heroes, while they are a family with three kids trying to live the simple civilian life, and later on when fate throws them a twist and they are forced to take up their super hero identities again for life or death because the future of the world rests in their hands.

This duo must save the world from Syndrome, a freakish fire-haired geek who always wanted to be a super hero as a small child but was snubbed by Mr. Incredible who always said, "I work alone" whenever Syndrome appeared.

With his technological advances like rocket boosters on his feet that enable him to fly he plots the demise of other super heroes out of greed and despair and mimics being a human-made super hero himself. Mr. Incredible says, "I work alone" a lot and one of the lessons he has to learn in this film is to let other people help him and the concept of team work.

The special effects in *The Incredibles* are good and the pace of the film is fast. It feels like an original piece, not some washed up Marvel wannabee. Yeah Pixar! Four out of five birds! 

FAMILY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

What about adopted family, are they any different from blood relatives? They are different because foster care has more child abuse records than a regular family but I think that what happens in a foster family can also happen in a biological family's home

My definition of family is being with people who care for you and love you. Right now I live with my mentor in Auburn. I have been living with her and her boyfriend for a month. It has been a good experience and I have done a lot that I never did with my biological family and it's just so fun, to sit down with them and have dinner and a movie. They have also both sat down with me to help me with my homework.

Another type of family is a TV family. What is a TV family? Their whole family all works together and gets along peacefully. At first when you see this family on TV you may feel jealous that you don't have the nice house and all the toys, but you have to remember that these families are not real they are fake They are what someone wanted their family to be like so they made it real on TV. That is what I feel that a TV family is, over all they're not real they are what other people wanted the family to be like.

My mentor looks out for me and wants me to do the best I can in school and thinks about my safety. For someone to do all these things then I know this is why she has to love me. I think that friends can be considered family too. Me and Anthony and Emile are all friends but we all consider each other family. We all watch one another's back and all care about our goals for the future. If one of us have a problem we know that we could talk to each other and if one of us were to get in a trouble then we can count on each other. 

The deadline to apply for Washington State's Governor's Scholarship for Foster Care Youth is March 2nd, 2005 To find out more information and how to apply, go to www.waedfoundation.org or call 1-877-655-4097